

TRANSPORTATION:

CLAY COUNTY COMMUNITY-BASED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

There are several organizations that cooperate on transportation planning within Clay County. The Clay County Highway Department works in conjunction with the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (F-M COG) on transportation issues for Clay County. The WCI in Fergus Falls also participates as a regional planning agency, assisting as an advisory body and providing technical assistance to the overall transportation planning process. There is also a district-wide committee - the Area Transportation Partnership, which is composed of local and state staff and elected officials. This group is allocated federal funds through the Minnesota Department of Transportation and works with the counties within their district to decide how those funds will be spent. Townships also have authority over the roads within their jurisdictions that are not County or State highways.

F-M COG's study area includes a sixteen-township ring around the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area; eight of those townships are in Clay County. Some of the information contained in this section is taken from the *2000 Surveillance and Monitoring Report* prepared by F-M COG in May 2000, which contains data on countywide services also. Information from the *1998 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* also prepared by the F-M COG is used throughout this section.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Clay County area is well served with a variety of transportation options. These options are outlined in the following pages.

Highways

Clay County has two interstate highways transecting the area: Interstate 29 runs north south (in North Dakota) and Interstate 94 runs east west. State Highways #10 and #75 also provide important intrastate accesses within the County. Two maps the functional classifications of roads within Clay County are shown in Figures 2-18a and 2-18b, *Roadway Functional Classification, Metro and Rural*, respectively. The metro roadway functional classification map includes the area under FM-COG jurisdiction, while the rural classification map applies to areas not within FM-COG's jurisdiction.

Bikeways

There are numerous bikeways throughout Moorhead and Fargo, making an enjoyable ride for the recreational bicyclist and providing transportation for those riding their bikes to work. Dilworth has also constructed bikeways from 34th Street to CSAH 9 and from 2nd Avenue North to 8th Avenue North.

F-M COG completed an extensive evaluation of the metropolitan bikeway system in 1995 with the preparation of the "*Metropolitan Bikeway Plan*". Bikeway deficiencies were identified and inventoried and it was recommended that this report be updated every five years to continue to invest in bikeway improvements based on sound planning.

Airports

Five airports are located in the Clay County area: Hector International Airport in Fargo, North Dakota; Moorhead Municipal Airport; West Fargo Municipal Airport in West Fargo, North Dakota; Hawley Municipal Airport; and the Barnesville Municipal Airport.

The Hector International Airport provides for the commercial movement of passengers, freight and mail. There are approximately 25 to 30 aircraft landings each day. This airport has four runways ranging from 4,199 feet to 9,545 feet long and 100 to 150 feet wide.

These runways have lighting and navigation aids to continue operations into the night. There is a terminal building for airline operations, rental cars, and baggage handling, restaurant and gift shop and conventional and maintenance hangers for the North Dakota Air National Guard and area businesses. In 1997, Hector Airport had over 200,000 boarding passengers.

The Moorhead Municipal Airport was constructed in 1996 to serve the area's industrial and business needs. Currently, it has one runway that is 4,000 feet long and 75 feet wide. The airport provides 28 conventional hangers and one maintenance hanger to serve its aircraft. Nighttime landings are possible with pilot activated lights on the runway. The airport also has a helicopter-landing pad and a chemical loading facility is provided for crop spraying airplanes. Flight instruction and aircraft rental are available.

The West Fargo Municipal Airport is a single runway airport that serves West Fargo and the surrounding area. The runway is 2,400 feet long and 50 feet wide. There are eleven hangers to provide maintenance and storage for aircraft. Night operations are possible with pilot activated lights on the runway.

The Hawley Municipal Airport has one asphalt runway in good condition that is 3,406 feet long by 75 feet wide. It is lighted dusk to dawn. This airport provides local general aviation services and also agricultural operations (aerial spraying) and aircraft sales.

The Barnesville Municipal Airport has one turf runway that is 2,707 feet long by 80 feet wide. The runway is not plowed during the winter months as the airport is closed. Aerial spraying services utilize the airport.

There are also several private airfields within the County used both for recreational and agricultural operations such as aerial spraying

Railroad Facilities

The Clay County area includes a major east-west railroad facility, with minor routes branching into and out of its cities in a number of directions. A major intermodal terminal facility is located in Dilworth. A large railroad yard where railroad car transfers occur is located in Fargo, North Dakota. Industrial land uses are located in the vicinity of both facilities to take advantage of the convenient access for freight shipping. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad owns the majority of the tracks. The Otter Tail Valley Railroad Company owns one track entering Moorhead and the Red River Valley Short Line Railroad Company owns another.

The Amtrak trains provide daily passenger rail service to the area and also express service for packages and mail.

The FM-COG continues to work closely with the cities of Moorhead, Fargo, West Fargo and Dilworth on issues relating to railroad traffic within the metro area.

Trucking

Trucking is an important mode of freight hauling in the area as both Interstates 29 and 94 transect the area. Because of this, the area has become a hub for over 250 trucking companies.

The cities of Fargo and Moorhead are participating in the Red River Trade Corridor project, which is intended to maximize the potential of I-29 as an international trade route through the United States between Mexico and Canada. This route is vital to the movement of freight and agricultural commodities and has the potential to increase in the future due to the passage of NAFTA and the efforts of the Red River Trade Corridor group.

There are no designated truck routes currently in Clay County. However, a system of roadways called the Metropolitan Beltline has been identified in the periphery of the urban area. This is intended to serve as an alternative route for drivers that wish to by-pass Fargo-Moorhead or freight haulers who would prefer a route with lower traffic volumes. The roads included in the Beltline are: CSAH #11, MN #336, CSAH #12, and CR #26 in Clay County; and, CR #22, CR #17, and 52nd Ave. South on the North Dakota side.

The City of Moorhead requires permits for over-sized loads. There are weight restrictions placed on some roads during the spring to protect the roadways during the spring thaw. Signs are placed on these roadways and a map is also available from the Moorhead City offices.

Agricultural Goods

The movement of agricultural goods is also a concern in Clay County. This includes both trucks and the movement of other farm implements, such as tractors and implements pulled behind tractors such as plows, cultivators, etc. In 1995, Clay County in conjunction with the FM-COG completed a study called the "Clay County Agricultural Goods Movement Study". From this study, eight alternatives were developed for improvements to the transportation system within Clay County for the movement of agricultural goods. The alternatives are listed below.

- Take no action
- Develop MN 336 improvements. (This includes both planning long and range improvements including an overpass, four lanes, and wide shoulder to accommodate both trucks and farm implements.)
- Pave CSAH 7 from CSAH 52 to CSAH 12.
- Extend County Highway #80 to MN #336.
- Implement Planned Highway 10/21st street intersection improvements.
- Establish designated truck routes in Moorhead with corresponding ordinances favorable to truck route design.
- Improve the I-94/S.E. Main Avenue interchange design.

- Implement Transportation System Management solutions at key intersections along agricultural goods movement routes. (A number of conditions undesirable from a freight movement basis were identified during the analysis of the report.)

The alternatives were presented to the local governmental entities with the recommendation by FM-COG that local governments and MnDOT pursue implementation of those alternatives within their jurisdictions.

Transit

Clay County Rural Transit started operations in 1995. This service provides affordable transportation to Clay County residents, particularly elderly and disabled persons. Four handicap-accessible vehicles serve four flexible-fixed routes and provide limited demand response service on a weekly schedule.

The Clay County Transit System is available to residents in both rural Clay County and Becker County. There are two daily commuter routes, traveling as far as Detroit Lakes, Audubon, Lake Park, Hawley, and Glyndon along Highway 10 to the Fargo/Moorhead area, and along Highway 52 from Barnesville and Sabin into Fargo/Moorhead (and Interstate 94). Most of the riders on the commuter routes travel to and from work in the Fargo/Moorhead area, although some do use the system to travel to the three local universities. These fixed routes begin at 6:30 a.m. and 6:15 a.m., with return trips at 4:30 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. The County also has a Dial-A-Ride service which requires riders to reserve a ride 24 hours in advance.

Table 2-26 illustrates rider ship numbers from 1995 to 1999.

**Table 2-26
Rural Transit Ridership Trends
Clay County
1995-1999**

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1,080	10,126	32,133	22,317	17,729

Source: F-M COG, 2000

Other transit programs are available in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, including: Moorhead Fixed Route system, Dial-A-Ride/Senior Dial-A-Ride, Moorhead College Route; Fargo Fixed Route System and Para transit/MAT Para transit; West Fargo Fixed Route System; and the Dilworth Fixed Route System.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The following tables illustrate the short and long range, potential transportation improvement projects for Clay County from F-M-COG’s “1998 Fargo-Moorhead Short and Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan.”

**Table 2-27
Short Range Potential Future Transportation Improvements
Clay County**

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS	Status in 1993 Highway Plan
Clay County Corridor Safety Project Rail Safety Improvements at County or Township Roads (three year project)	New, scheduled for 1999-2001 in TIP
Red River Crossing (South of CR 74) -Preserve adequate right of way for a bridge corridor between CR 74 and CR 67 (pending 1998 Red River Crossing Study recommendation). Preserve the selected corridor between the Red River and TH 75) - Preserve adequate right of way for a County Rd. 65 bridge corridor and increase CR 65 ROW to 150 ft. (aligns with 100 th Ave. S. in Cass Co.)	Short Range Short Range
CSAH 10 (TH9 to CR71) Reconstruct 2.5 miles of CSAH 10. Includes grading bridge replacement and 10 ton paving (outside MPO)	New, scheduled for 2000
BIKEWAYS	
County Road 74 (Red River to TH 75) Construct Class I bikeway, as identified in the 52 nd Ave. S. Corridor Study	Long Range in MBP
County Road 11 (County Road 12 to I-94) Construct Class II bikeway (wide shoulders) when the roadway is reconstructed	Long Range in MBP
TRANSIT	
Purchase two medium buses	New
Purchase one mini-bus	New

Source: 1998 Fargo-Moorhead Short and Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan by FM-COG

**Table 2-28
Long Range Potential Future
Transportation Improvements
Clay County**

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS	Status in 1993 Hwy. Plan
CSAH 7 (CSAH 12 to CSAH 52) Construct paved two lane roadway	New
12 th Ave. S. (CR 81 - MN 336) Construct paved two lane road	New
Red River Bridge (Clay CSAH 22/Cass CR 20) Reconstruct bridge in cooperation with Cass County. Cost to be shared 50/50 between counties, with each county having a 20 percent local share of there 50%	New
South Side Red River Bridge and Connection to I-29 Participate with Cass County and Fargo in the construction of a four-lane Red River Bridge and connecting roadway between the Red River and I-29, and an interchange with I-29.	New
CSAH 22 (Red River to TH 75) Capacity, TSM, traffic control and pavement repair/reconstruction improvements as identified in the 1998 Air Cargo Study, and Class Class II bikeway or I.	New
BIKEWAYS	
County Road 11 (CR 18 to CR 26) Construct Class II bikeway (wide shoulder) when roadway is reconstructed	New
County Road 11 (CR 12 to Sabin) Construct Class II bikeway (wide shoulder) when roadway is reconstructed	New
TRANSIT	
Purchase mini-bus (in approx. 2007)	New
Purchase two medium buses (in approx. 2010 & 2011)	New
Purchase mini-bus (in approx. 2010)	New
Purchase/replace a mini-bus (in approx. 2013)	New
Purchase/replace two medium buses (in approx. 2016 & 2017)	New
Purchase/replace two mini-buses (in approx. 2016 & 2019)	New

Source: 1998 Fargo-Moorhead Short and Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan by FM-COG

The following are Minnesota Department of Transportation short and long range, potential future plans for Minnesota trunk highways and bikeways along those highways in Clay County.

**Table 2-29
Short Range MnDOT Potential Future
Transportation Improvements
Clay County**

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS	Status in 1993 Hwy. Plan
TH 10 (TH 75 to TH 336) T.M./T.M./ITS improvements to the TH 10 corridor	New
MN 336 at TH 10 Construct interchange at MN 336 at TH 10	New, scheduled for 2000-2001 in TIP
TH 75 Bridge over I-94 Reconstruct the TH 75 bridge over I-94 with adequate width for future widening of I-94 to six lanes	New, scheduled for 2001 in TIP
Main Avenue Bridge over the Red River Major Rehabilitation of bridge	New, tentatively programmed for 2002-2003
MN 336 (I-94 to TH 10) Reconstruct as a 4 lane roadway with turn lanes at existing and future major intersections	New
I-94 (TH 75 to MN 336) Phase I: Construct auxiliary lanes on I-94 at the interchange with MN 336 Phase 2: Reconstruct and widen to a six lane facility	New
SE Main Ave. (at I-94) (MnDOT Project) Construct street lighting at the junction of SE Main Ave. And I-94	Short Range
20 th St. at I-94 Install traffic signal at south ramp when warrants are met	New
SE Main/I-94 Interchange Reconstruct and realign the interchange	Short Range
BIKEWAYS	
TH 10 (34 th to Buffalo River State Park) Construct a separated bikeway facility	Short Range
Bicycle Path (TH 75 at I-94) Construct a bike path near TH 75 with a grade separation of I-94	New, future facility in Metro Bikeway Plan

Source: MnDOT

**Table 2-30
Long Range Potential Future MnDOT
Transportation Improvements
Clay County**

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS	Status in 1993 Hwy. Plan
20 th Street at I-94 Reconstruct RR bridge to accommodate widening of I-94 to six lanes, including separated pedestrian/bike facility	New
MN 336 at I-94 Reconstruct bridge over I-94 to provide left turn lane	New
TH 75 (40 th Ave. S. to CR 74) Construct separated bicycle path	New
TH 75 (40 th Ave. S. to CR 74) Reconstruct roadway and widen to four lanes with turn lanes	New

Source: MnDOT

In addition to the projects identified in the tables above, MnDOT has recently begun planning for a reroute of Highway 75 around the Moorhead area. This plan would align the Highway with the current CR 74 from the existing CR 12/Highway 75-intersection east to CSAH 11. It would then follow CSAH 11 north to CSAH 26 where it would follow that alignment back west to the existing Highway 75.

The preceding tables of short and long-range future potential improvements include only the eight-township area in Clay County served by the FM Metro COG and are shown on Figure 2-19, *Planned Transportation Improvements*.

The remainder of Clay County townships is included in County Highway transportation plans from the County Engineer’s office. Some of the proposed, major construction projects for 2000 to 2005 are included in Table 2-31.

**Table 2-31
Highway Department Proposed Major Construction Projects
Clay County
2000-2005**

Hwy	Location	Type of Construction	Miles	Year
10	T.H. 9 to Co. Rd. 71	Grading, Bridge Replacement & 10 ton paving	2.5	2000
11	So. Co. Line to CSAH 2	Grading	2.4	2000
19	Sec 5-6 Flowing	Bridge Replacement		2000
27	Sec. 15-16 Hagen	Bridge Replacement		2000
27	Sec. 15-16 Keene	Bridge Replacement		2000
34	T.H.9 to CSAH 27	10 ton paving	5.4	2000
11	So. Co. Line to CSAH 2	10 ton paving	2.4	2001
52	Sabin to I-94	Grading, edge drains & Bituminous overlay	5.5	2001
93	Sec. 8-17 Oakport	Bridge Replacement		2001
115	Sec. 33 Highland Grove	Bridge Replacement		2001
11	CSAH 28 to CSAH 34	10 ton paving	5	2002
18	Sec. 28-33 Moland	Bridge Replacement		2002
18	Sec. 28-33 Moland	Grading & 10 ton paving	1.0	2002
63	Sec. 29-33 Elmwood	Bridge Replacement		2002
78	Co. Rd. 80 No. 0.8 Mi.	9 ton paving	0.8	2002
2	Sec. 23-26 Alliance	Bridge Replacement		2003
15	Sec. 10-11 Alliance	Bridge Replacement		2003
34	CSAH 27 to 0.5 Mi. W. TH 32	Grading	5.5	2003
114	CSAH 33 W. 1.1 Mi.	9 ton paving	1.1	2003
11	CSAH2 to CSAH 4	10 ton paving	4.0	2004
34	CSAH 27 to 0.5 Mi. W. TH 32	10 ton paving	5.5	2004
7	CSAH 12 to CSAH 52	10 ton paving	2.4	2005
19	CSAH 26 So. 0.8 Mi.	10 ton paving	0.8	2005
19	0.5 Mi. N of TH.10 to CSAH 18	10 ton paving	1.5	2005
26	T.H. 32 to E. Co. Line	10 ton paving	3.5	2005

Source: Clay County Highway Department

The source of local funds used for transportation construction and reconstruction in Clay County is the County General Fund. In 1999, the initial year of the short range plans, local revenues are estimated at \$250,000. These funds have been estimated to remain stable throughout the short-range years, at \$250,000 per year. The County also receives state aid funds annually. The amount received in 1999 was approximately \$1.7 million. This is expected to increase at a rate of approximately \$100,000 every three years. Federal Transportation funds are also received on a project-by-project basis through the Area Transportation Partnership (ATP). Based on past funding it is assumed that approximately \$200,000 will be available every other year through Federal funds.

According to the FM COG Metropolitan Transportation Plan study, the projects noted in the preceding tables can be feasible funded based on revenue estimates. The projects in the eight-township area of Clay County will use a reasonable proportion of the total Clay County revenues for transportation projects.

PLANNING TOOLS

The FM-COG has developed Metropolitan Right-Of-Way Standards that could be implemented Countywide in road design and development. They have also developed Access Management Guidelines for the metropolitan area that could be used throughout Clay County if approved and adopted by the County. Also, MnDOT access management standards could be considered for implementation on state roads.